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Message Text

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PAGE 01 KATHMA 01082 01 OF 02 020420Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /094 W
----------084421 020508Z /20
R 011031Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1224
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, NP
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER ON NEPALESE FOREIGN POLICY

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER KIRTI BIDHI BISTA FEB 24 ADDRESSED THE NEPAL COUNCIL OF WORLD AFFAIRS ON THE SUBJECT OF NEPALESE FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS CURRENT STATE. NOT SURPRISINGLY, SPEECH CONCENTRATED ON NEPAL'S RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND CHINA AND WITH REGION AS WHOLE. HOWEVER, NEED FOR CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN SOVIETS AND US ALSO STRESSED AS MAJOR GOAL, WITH US ACTIVITIES IN NEPAL, IN REGION AND ELSEWHERE BEING GIVEN SOMEWHAT DISPROPORTIONATE ATTENTION. IN GENERAL, BISTA FOUND STATE OF WORLD AND NEPAL'S PLACE IN IT SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN SEVERAL YEARS AGO. END SUMMARY

2. BISTA LED OFF SPEECH (FULL TEXT BEING POUCHED AREA POSTS AND NEA/INS) WITH DISCUSSION OF COUNTRY'S INTERNAL GOALS AS CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH TO VIEW FOREIGN POLICY. HE SAID GON COMMITTED TO BUILDING "BASICALLY EGALITARIAN
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PAGE 02 KATHMA 01082 01 OF 02 020420Z

SOCIETY" IN WHICH ALL LIVE IN FREEDOM AND COMFORT. TO THIS END PANCHAYAT SYSTEM HAS PROVED EFFECTIVE. BUT PRIME MINISTER NOTED THAT THIS SYSTEM IS NOT STATIC; IT IS FLEXIBLE AND CAN ADJUST TO PROBLEMS AS THEY ARISE.

3. TURNING TO FOREIGN POLICY FROM OVERALL PERSPECTIVE BISTA LABELLED NEPAL'S AS "RELIABLE AND PROGRESSIVE", BORN

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

OUT OF "OUR HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY". NEPAL'S PERCEPTIONS BASED ON "NEED FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA ON ONE HAND AND BETWEEN US AND SOVIET UNION ON THE OTHER." BUT HE ALSO STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF PROSPERITY AND COOPERATION AMONG ALL NATIONS OF REGION. FINALLY HE CALLED FOR DEEMPHASIS OF MILITARY POWER IN THE MAINTENANCE OF WORLD PEACE.

4. SPEAKING OF RELATIONS WITH PARTICULAR COUNTRIES, BISTA NOTED RECENT DESAI AND TENG VISITS. WHILE DESCRIBING ACHIEVEMENTS OF BOTH, HE UNDERLINED FACT THAT THEY WERE "ESSENTIALLY GOOD-WILL VISITS". PRIME MINISTER SPOKE OPTIMISTICALLY RE PROSPECT FOR TRADE AND TRANSIT AGREEMENT WITH INDIA. HE USED MENTION OF EXCHANGE OF VISITS WITH BANGLADESH TO LAUNCH DISCUSSION OF RE-GIONAL COOPERATION FOR WHICH HE SAW "ENCOURAGING SENSE OF PROGRESS IN CREATION OF PROPER CLIMATE." IN THIS CONNECTION HE CITED PRESIDENT CARTER'S AND PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN'S STATEMENTS AS HELPFUL.

5. SPEAKING OF RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS AND US, HE SAID BOTH HAD GREAT POTENTIAL FOR CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN REGIONAL OBJECTIVES, BUT THEY SHOULD "RECOGNIZE PRIMACY OF REGIONAL INTERESTS...OVER THEIR GLOBAL INTERESTS." BISTA SAID RELATIONS WITH BOTH US & USSR WERE GOOD AND CITED ECONOMIC COOPERATION AS SPECIFIC EXAMPLE. HE THEN WENT ON, HOWEVER, TO "UNDERSCORE...WARM RELATIONS" WITH US AND WELCOMED DISCUSSIONS OF STILL GREATER US CONTRIBUTION TO NEPAL'S DEVELOPMENT
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EFFORT, "INCLUDING INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT ON SUBSTANTIAL SCALE."

6. RE ISSUES, FURTHER AFIELD, ON MIDDLE EAST BISTA SUPPORTED SADAT INITIATIVE; ENDORSED RETURN OF OCCUPIED LANDS, SECURE FRONTIERS FOR ALL AND CREATION OF PALESTINIAN HOMELAND; AND CALLED FOR NONALIGNED MORAL PRESSURE TOWARDS PEACE. ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, HE SAW DEADLOCK AFTER "FLICKER OF HOPE UNDER ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVE", WHILE HORN OF AFRICA CITED AS EXAMPLE OF DANGERS WHEN EXTERNAL INVOLVEMENT ALLOWED GO BEYOND ABSOLUTE MINIMUM. ON POSITIVE NOTE, HE WELCOMED IMPROVED AREA RELATIONS, GREATER CHINESE-EUROPEAN CONTACTS, US EFFORTS TO RESOLVE PANAMA CANAL ISSUE AND FACT THAT SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS HAD SURVIVED PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND NEW SALT PROPOSALS. HE NOTED THAT INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH U.S. HAVE IMPROVED, AND THAT "CLOUDS BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA ARE SHEDDING SOME OF THEIR IMMOBILITY."

7. IN CLOSING, BISTA GOT IN DIG AT PARTY OR PARTIES UNNAMED

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 KATHMANDU 1082

BY NOTING THAT, WHILE PRINCIPLE IS UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED
THAT NEPAL'S INTERNAL SYSTEM AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ENTIRELY HER
OWN AFFAIR, THIS "SOMEWHAT LESS UNIVERSALLY PRACTICED." HE
STRESSED NEPAL'S VITAL STAKE IN PEACE AS KEY TO ITS VERY
SURVIVAL. THIS WAS SOUGHT THROUGH RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORS,
THROUGH SUPPORT OF UN AND THROUGH ZONE OF PEACE PROPOSAL.
OTHERS INCREASINGLY UNDERSTAND AND SHARE IN THIS POSITION,
WITH RESULT THAT NEPAL'S "TOTAL POSITION IN THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY IS SATISFACTORY" AND THAT OPTIMISM RE THE FUTURE IS
JUSTIFIED.

8. COMMENT: BISTA'S SPEECH CONTAINS FEW SURPRISES BUT IS A
USEFUL ROUND UP OF NEPAL'S FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES AND OF
STATUS OF ITS RELATIONS WITH PRINCIPAL NEIGHBORS AND PARTNERS.
IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE EMPHASIS ON IMPROVED BILATERAL AND
REGIONAL RELATIONS AND RESULTING DOWN PLAY OF POLICIES SUCH
AS ZONE OF PEACE DESIGNED TO PROTECT NEPAL FROM SURROUNDING
TURMOIL. SOMEWHAT DISPROPORTIONATE ATTENTION GIVEN TO US
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ALSO NOTEWORTHY. WE, OF COURSE, AGREE THAT RELATIONS ARE
GOOD AND BISTA'S CHARACTERIZATION OF THEM AS WARM REFLECTS

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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NOT ONLY LONG STANDING ABSENCE OF ANY IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES
BUT ALSO CURRENT NEPALESE SATISFACTION OVER RECENT US
INITIATIVES REGIONALLY AND BILATERALLY. HMG
WELCOMES STRESS ON REGIONAL COOPERATION WHICH IS HARMONIOUS
WITH KING'S OWN PROPOSALS. DOMESTICALLY, PROSPECTS FOR
INCREASED DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE FOCUSING ON AREAS SUCH
AS RURAL SECTOR ARE CONSISTENT WITH NEPAL'S OWN PRIORITIES.
FOR TIME BEING AT LEAST WE ARE GENERALLY ON SAME
WAVELENGTH AND NEPALESE DERIVE CONSIDERABLE COMFORT FROM
THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS AND ARE PREPARED TO SO EXPRESS
THEMSELVES PUBLICLY.
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Type: TE
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